

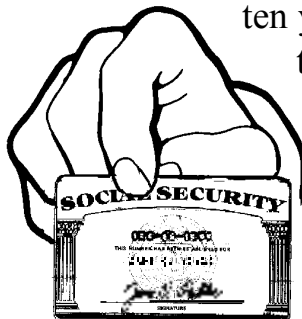
MAURICE HINCHEY

WORKING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS



PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

Once again, the reactionary forces in Washington are trying to undermine Social Security and Medicare, this time by taking money from the trust funds to pay for tax cuts for wealthy special interests. Despite repeated promises that the Social Security and Medicare trust funds would not be touched, the budget proposed by the



president will take almost \$2.5 trillion from the Social Security Trust Fund over the next ten years, more than 86 percent of the trust fund. This year alone, the Republican budget spends the entire Medicare surplus. I oppose this exploitation of Social Security and Medicare and will continue fighting for a budget that protects them.

PRESERVING SAFE RETIREMENT BENEFITS

A commission appointed by President Bush has proposed a plan in which the money people pay into Social Security could be invested in the stock market, removing the guarantee that has always been an essential part of the program. This is simply a bad idea. I fully support increasing opportunities for

people to make private investments for their retirement, but I also believe that Social Security must remain risk-free. While we need to take steps to preserve and strengthen Social Security in the long-term, privatizing the system will make matters worse, as it will cause benefits for current and future retirees to be cut. Social Security must continue to provide what it has since its inception: a risk-free progressive monthly benefit that lasts a lifetime and is guaranteed to increase every year with the rate of inflation.

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MAKING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS AFFORDABLE

Too many senior citizens have no insurance for the prescription drugs they need. In some cases they have to choose between buying their medicine and other necessities. We can and should solve this serious problem by providing a guaranteed and comprehensive prescription drug benefit for all Medicare beneficiaries. But again, the president's tax cut has not left enough money in the budget to fund a plan that would work. This has made the fight for a good prescription drug plan an uphill battle, but it's one that I am committed to waging to a successful conclusion. I continue to support other legislative measures that would drastically reduce the cost of prescription



Congressman Hinchey talks with a constituent about seniors' issues

drugs. I am a sponsor of legislation that would make the pharmaceutical companies give

people on Medicare the same favorable rates that are negotiated for military and veterans' hospitals. This would create discounts for seniors of about 40 percent. I also support a plan to allow pharmacies to re-import American-made prescription drugs from Canada and other countries where prices are

much lower. This would result in prices that are 30 to 50 percent lower than we pay now. We fought hard to get this legislation passed last summer. Unfortunately the House leadership and the drug manufacturers blocked our efforts, but we'll be back this year.

ENSURING RETIREES OF CONTINUED HEALTH COVERAGE

Hundreds of seniors in our area have been the victims of an unfair business practice. A number of large companies have reduced retirees' health benefits in order to cut costs and increase profits. I strongly believe this practice should be illegal. The decision to retire is based on an estimate of what your income and expenses will be after you stop working. It's not fair to change the rules after you've already made that decision and retired. That's why I joined 90 of my colleagues in introducing the Emergency Retiree Health Benefits Protection Act. This bill would protect retirees in employer-provided health plans from having their benefits eliminated or cut back. I will continue to pressure the House leadership to bring this critical legislation up for a vote this year.

Contact Me

Please feel free to contact me if you'd like more information about these issues, or if you need assistance with your Social Security, Medicare, veterans' or other benefits. I look forward to hearing from you.

Binghamton:

100A Federal Building
Binghamton, NY 13901
(607)773-2768

Ithaca:

123 S. Cayuga St. #201
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 273-1388

Kingston:

291 Wall Street
Kingston, NY 12401
(845) 331-4466

Monticello:

18 Anawana Lake Rd.
Monticello, NY 12701
(845) 791-7116

Washington, D.C.

2431 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-6335

www.house.gov/hinchey